

SAPC-10273
Copy 4 of 5.

25 October 1956

MEMORANDUM FOR : Contracting Officer
SUBJECT : Col. Merrington's Request to put ARDC's U-2's
at Edwards AFB

1. As we have discussed before the idea of ARDC's three airplanes being housed at Edwards AFB, you know my feeling in this regard. My stand remains unchanged, namely, that as long as our project is active and our mission has not been officially compromised, I will not recommend to my superiors or approve any request to place ARDC's aircraft at Edwards.

2. Simply stated, my reasons are that regardless of how securely they house the aircraft at Edwards, if this airplane is flown there, within a matter of days every U.S. aircraft manufacturer's representative operating from Edwards will know quite accurately the altitude, climb, endurance and functional capabilities. Furthermore, these representatives will without doubt relay such information to their companies in order that they may be aware of the latest performance capabilities of aircraft at Edwards. This in turn will channel the information to the chief aerodynamicists, the structural and preliminary design personnel throughout the aircraft industry.

3. I am aware that the Russians without doubt know reasonably closely the altitude and range capabilities of our aircraft; however, I do not think they know all of the functional capabilities

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[redacted] The fact that such information has not been published by a foreign country or acknowledged by this country indicates to me that we still have a reasonable degree of security. This I propose to maintain as long as we are active. Having been a Wright Field man at one time, I know that they can accomplish any tests necessary to the success of the SAC program at places other than Edwards if they are willing to face the difficulties encountered, namely of moving the project engineer and the pilot who is to fly the aircraft to another location. Furthermore, I see no testing of the U-2 which is vital to the completion of either our mission or SAC's since I believe we have exploited the capabilities of this airplane enough to enable us to get the maximum out of it. I see nothing that ARDC can gain in running sawtooth climbs, speed tests, etc. which will greatly enhance the mission accomplishment of this bird in our program or in SAC's.

USAF review(s) completed.

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4. Such being the case, I see no reason why ARDC tests can not be delayed or eliminated, or conducted at some appropriate base where our project's security will not be jeopardized. I understand that my feeling is somewhat concurred in by Mr. Bissell though possibly not as strongly as I feel, and also that Kelly Johnson also shares to a degree my feeling of not wanting to place the U-2 at Edwards as long as we still have any degree of security to guard.

J. A. GIBBS
Deputy Project Director

- 1 - Contr. Off.
- 2 - RMB
- 3 - Admin/Security
- 4 - JAG
- 5 - Chren.

JAG